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THE REPUTATION OF ALEXANDER POPE FROM 1750 TO 1800

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SUPERVISION BY Minnie Frances Harris

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BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts in English

Stuart P. Sherman

In Charge of Thesis

Stuart P. Sherman

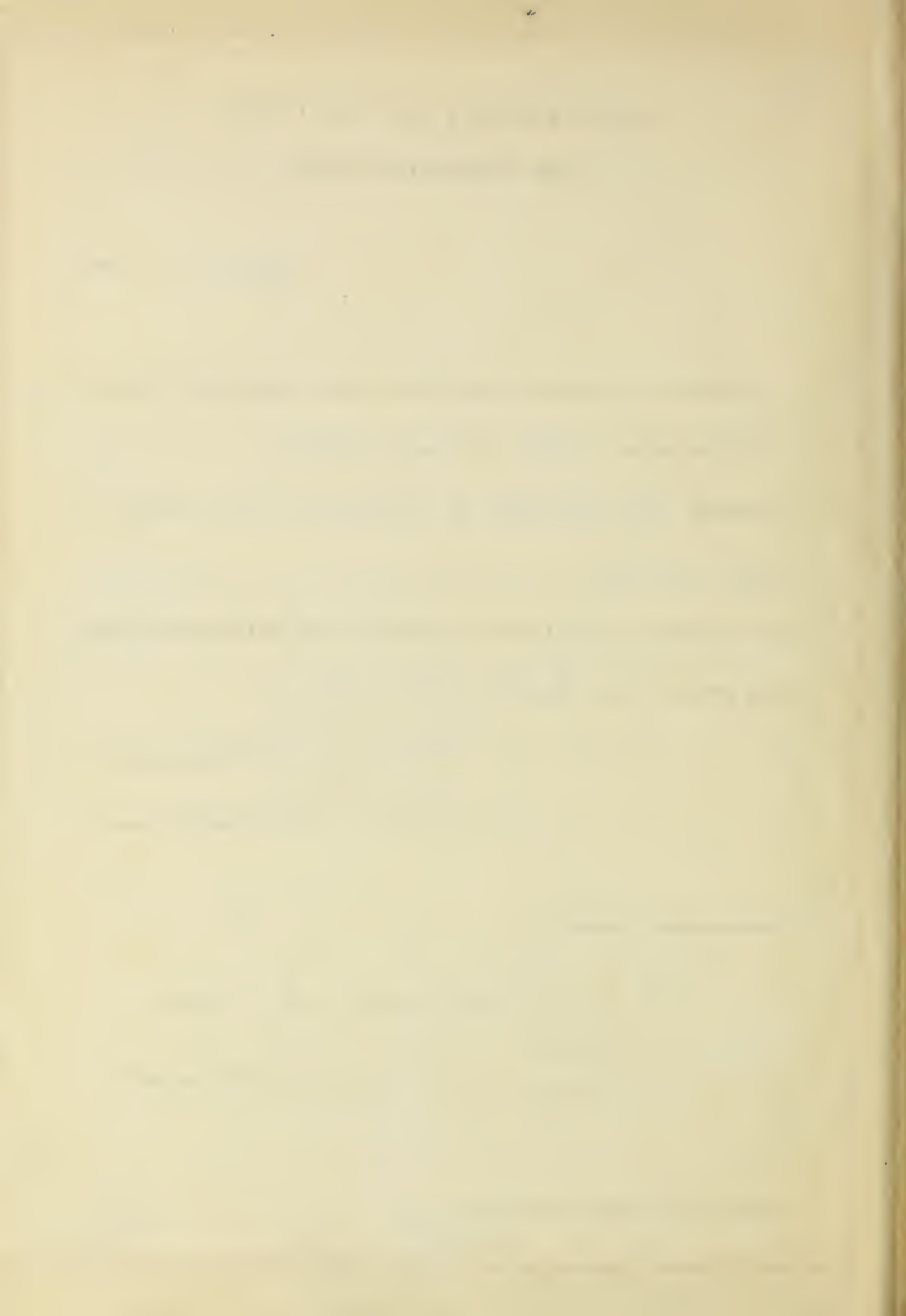
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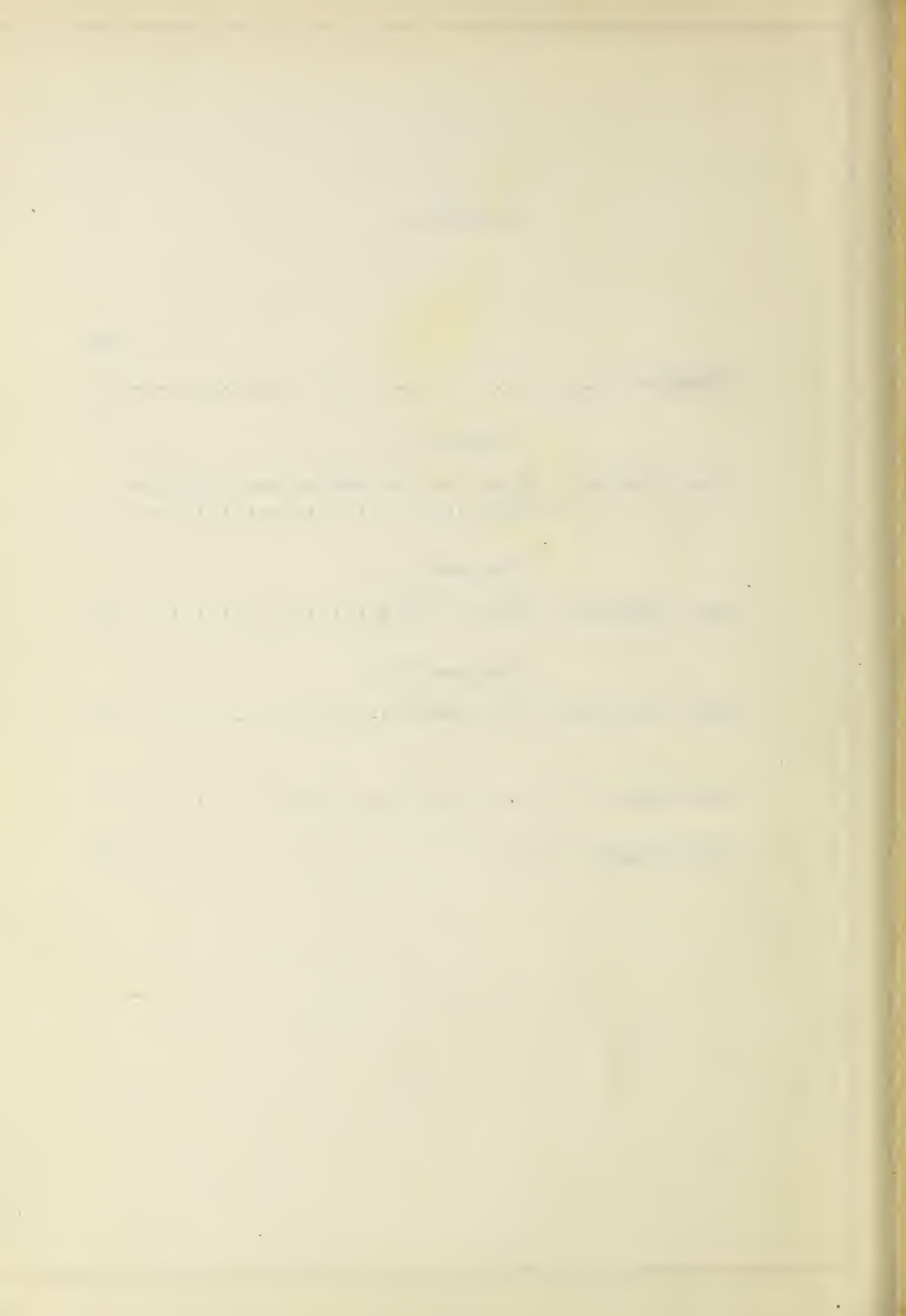
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THE REPUTATION OF ALEXANDER POPE FROM 1750-1800.

The works of Alexander Pope have given rise to a more varied criticism than perhaps those of any other poet. Some critics place him as one of our master poets; while others scarcely give him the title of poet. Some placed him near the level of Shakespeare and Milton, while Joseph Warton in "Essays and Writings of Pope" said, "The sublime and the pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy. But what is there transcendently sublime or pathetic in Pope?"

To account for this wide divergence in opinion we have only to notice the different times when these statements were made. If we take the criticisms of Pope during the Classical Age, or what is more often termed the "Age of Pope," we get a far different result than upon taking the criticisms of his works in the latter half of the Eighteenth century.

No author ever had so much fame in his own life-time as did Pope, unless it be Voltaire. Milton never had great popularity nor an age of his own as Pope did. Although Dryden and Pope wrote in much the same style, it was Pope who brought the methods of Dryden to great perfection and was accepted sovereign of the epoch

of connoisseurs and critics. Pope, perhaps, held a higher place in literature in his own day than Lord Tennyson has held in ours, for Tennyson had noble rivals and friends who came near to him in fame, while Pope, until the publication of Thompson's "Seasons" in 1730, stood alone in poetical reputation.

This with Thomas Warton's "Observations on the 'Fairy Queen'," and "Essays and Writings of Pope" by Joseph Warton might be said to be the first works of importance that led to the romantic movement. With the coming of this movement we cannot help but recognize the waning in Pope's influence.

This decrease in the power of Pope is most obviously seen in the editions of his works. Of the collected works of Pope there were eleven editions before 1750. From 1751 to 1770 there were fourteen editions, and each publication was comprised of from four to ten volumes; the greater majority being taken from Mr. Warburton's edition, which appeared in 1751. Between 1770 and 1800 there were no editions of Pope's collected works; but three of his poetical works (incomplete) and two of his complete poetical works appeared. Many of his poems were published in "British Poets" (1773) and "Poets of Great Britain" (1782) by Bell; "The Works of the English Poets" (1779) by Johnson; and "A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain" (1793) by Anderson. Of the editions that contained two or more of Pope's poems there were nine edited before 1754, and six edited between 1754 and 1800. Thus we see the decline in the editions of his works from the first half of the Eighteenth century to the last half, but the greatest decline of his collected works

was from 1770 to 1800 when there were no publications.

The "Dunciad" had great popularity in the first half of the century but not so in the latter half. In 1728 there were four editions, nine editions in 1729, eight in 1742, and one in German in 1747. Between 1725 and 1735 there were over a dozen books of essays and criticisms written on the "Dunciad." This shows to what an extent it was being read and discussed. But after 1747 to the end of the century there was but one edition that appeared and that was in French.

Of "Eloisa and Abelard" there appeared but one edition in English between 1770 and 1805. There was an edition in English, French, and Italian in 1791; one in English and French in 1796; 1795 one in French; and in 1780 one in German, but was only one in English.

Of the "Essay on Criticism" there was an English and German edition in 1745, and four Italian editions before 1760. Of English editions there were three before 1750, one in 1751, and that was all for a hundred years.

Of all of Pope's works, the "Essay on Man" had more editions from 1750 to 1800 than any of his other works. Before 1750 there had appeared eleven editions in English; one in French and English; in the English and German there was one; one in French and German; two in French. After 1750 there appeared fourteen English editions; two French; one English and German edition; one in German; one in English and Italian; two in Dutch; three in Italian; and two in Latin. We see there were not only more English editions in the last of the century, but more foreign editions as well. This,

however, is unusual and is the only instance where it occurs.

The "Rape of the Lock" had fewer editions in the last half of the century than any of Pope's other important works. Before 1750 there were six English editions; two in French; two in Italian; and one in German. But after 1750 there were only two English editions and one foreign edition in Dutch. This is peculiar since it, more than any of his works, shows romantic tendencies.

Not only in the more noted works of Pope is this decrease in publications shown, but also in his minor works. Before 1750 there were two editions of "Windsor Forest," but not another until one in 1794. Of "Imitations of Horace" there were eleven editions before 1750, but there were none after that, nor were there any of "Ode on St.Cecilia's Day" after 1750.

Because there were few editions of Pope's works during the last half of the century in comparison to the first half, does not necessarily mean that Pope's influence was entirely gone. However, it does show us that, although there were enough editions to supply the people that read Pope, there was not a demand for Pope's works as there had been previously, nor were the public in general reading Pope.

CHAPTER ONE.

Joseph Warton's "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope."

In the present day there is still much discussion as to which of the criticisms written by the Wartons, dealt the greatest blows to the classical standards of poetry. The criticisms set forth by Thomas Warton in his "Observations on the 'Fairy Queen' " were considered by many to have held this place.¹ Although his work may have been of great historical value, yet it was not as direct a criticism on Pope, nor was it so opposed to the conventions of the age as was Joseph's "Essay on Pope."

This "Essay" published in 1756, was the first severe criticism made upon the reputation of this idolized poet. Hitherto the public had lauded him almost unanimously. The discussions concerning his works had for the most part been those of commendation, with the exception of attacks made by Dennis and Addison, which were the results rather of personal enmity than a disapproval of his works. Under these conditions it was only to be expected that the appearance of this unusual and startling criticism should create a furor in the minds of the people.

Although the "Essay" contains much incidental praise of Pope, it depreciates the order of poetry of which Pope was the most brilliant representative. It seems to be Warton's desire to overthrow the school of Pope and to substitute Spenser, Shakespeare,

1 "Thomas Warton" by Clarissa Rinaker.

and Milton as models for the young poets. The tendency is to break away from the classical standards to the freer spirit of a new romanticism.

The central purpose of Warton's work is to distinguish the kinds of poetry and their relative values, and to establish Pope's rank by assigning him to his kind.⁶ Until this book appeared, Pope had been considered supreme among living English writers, and it was hardly questioned that he ranked among the greatest poets of all ages. Warton disagreed with this prevalent opinion. He placed Pope rather among secondary authors and reserved first place for Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton.

These older authors had long been greatly criticized and underrated by leaders in the Augustan age. The pseudo-classical critics believed that definite rules should be followed in writing. Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton they believed were unfortunate in not having sound principles by which to be guided. Had they lived in the classical age and imitated the models rather than turning to nature, their reputation would not have suffered as it did. Dryden thought to improve Milton's "Paradise Lost" by making it conform to the conventions of the age, and he did rewrite it using the heroic-couplet. Addison in the "Spectator" praises Milton in some respects, but on the whole is apologetic, and complains because he did not end his fable with satisfaction. Pope himself looked down on the Elizabethian Age of dramatists, and although he considered Shakespeare a genius, yet he thought him greatly hindered by having no principles to go by, and also by the "Barbarous" age itself, in which he lived.

The apologetic attitude toward these writers had been prevalent all through the Augustan Age. For Joseph Warton to place them at the head of all poets was a startling and unheard of classification. He placed them there because their works were imaginative and were filled with the "sublime and the pathetic", while the poetry of Pope had neither of these. He had none of the passionate sense of the beauties of nature, nor was he a poet of strong imagination or of great enthusiasm. He lacked the deep insight into the heart of man which was so characteristic of the other three. The "sublime and pathetic" which Warton declared were the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry, were not to be found in the works of Pope. Thus the reason for placing him below the supreme poets.

Men of less poetic tendencies, but who excelled in the rhetorical and didactic were placed in the second group. Of this group, composed of Dryden, Prior, Addison, Cowley, Waller, Garth, Fenton, Gay, Denham, and Parnell, Pope was considered by Warton as the best, because his genius was particularly turned to the didactic and the moral, and because he gave the best work of this kind. He even excelled Dryden, who was very good in this species of writing and far surpassed all other writers in this class. As a wit, a critic, a man of observation and of the world, he judged others by his own feelings and standards. His quick tact for thought and manners as established by the forms and customs of society, is evidenced throughout his works. He was a poet of art, but not of nature. It was not the manner in which Pope wrote that

Warton objected to, but it was the kind of poetry he disliked.

In the third rank Warton placed Butler, Swift, Rochester, Donne, Dorset, and Oldham. These are men of wit, having excellent taste and fancy in describing familiar life, but not the higher scenes of poetry.

In the fourth group he placed Pitt, Sandys, Fairfax, Broome, Buckingham, and Lansdown. They were "mere versifiers, however smooth and mellifluous some of them may be thought to have been." This enumeration was not intended as a complete classification of writers, and in their proper order, but to mark out mainly the different species of our celebrated writers.

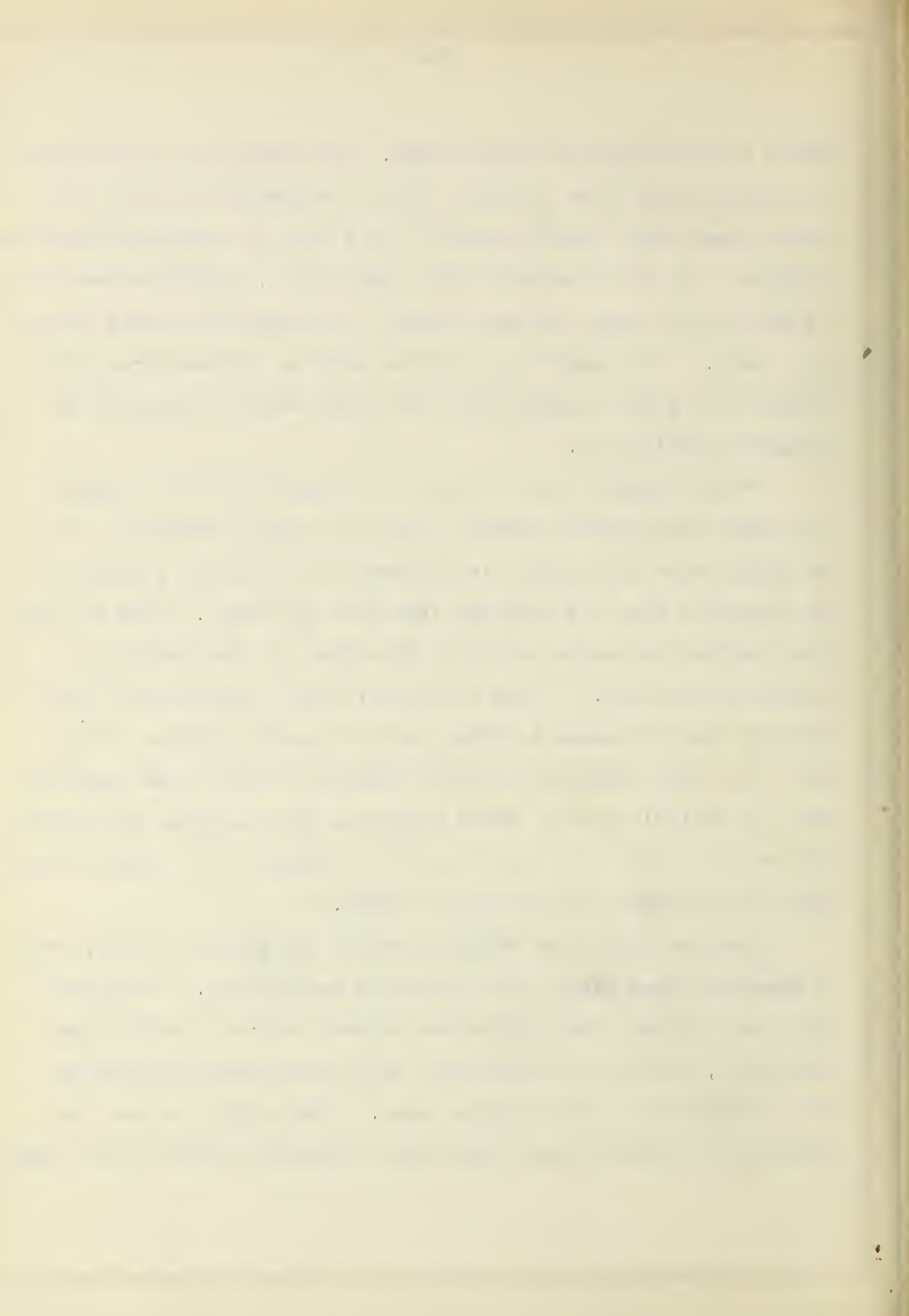
By way of adverse criticism, Warton speaks of Pope's facile method in copying from other authors, and it is quite true that the ideas of other authors do predominate in his works. This is obvious in his "Temple of Fame." This hint he received from Chaucer's "House of Fame" though the design is really improved by the hand of Pope. His "Rape of the Lock" which is the best heroic-comic poem, shows the influence of the three following works; "Rape of the Bucket" by Alessandro Tassoni, the "Lutrin" by Boileau, and Garth's "Dispensary." The imaginative element that exists in this work is mainly founded on the sylphs of Boileau and Garth; although Pope did not create them he has used them with great judgment and skill.

Pope himself declared that all that remained for him to do was merely to polish and perfect what his predecessors had written.

Warton discountenanced this attitude. He thought this equivalent to stealing from other authors; and his estimation of the poet's writings was much lowered because of his lack of originality and initiative. He said concerning the "Pastorals", that "there was not a single rural image that was new, and the descriptions were trite and common." Although Pope improved what he borrowed from other writers, yet Warton thought that his works were not original and contained nothing new.

Warton admits that in some of the works of Pope is seen the tender and pathetic feeling, but not in many instances. In a few cases where this spirit is observed it is clearly a result of the occasions when the feelings came from the heart. Thus we find this inspiration predominating in "The Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady." Here the occasion for the work was real and this reality seemed to bring out the inward emotions of his soul. The very response of Pope's emotions at this time seemed to bear out Warton's maxim; "That nature is more powerful than fancy; that we can always feel more than we can imagine; and that the most artificial fiction can give way to truth."

Another fault that Warton found in the poetry of Pope, and in poetry of that time, was excessive description. Throughout the classical age, description was general and not specific, was indefinite, gave no vivid picture, and nothing was mentioned by its common or even its technical name. Poets might choose the simplest of ideas and even these were accepted, providing they were



told in an elegant manner and were put upon a high and lofty plane, above the comprehension of the average reader. This artificial description was not written unintentionally, but in accordance with the aim and theory of all poets striving to follow the example given them by inferior models.

Warton held opposite views concerning description. He believed, before Wordsworth, in drawing with the eye upon the object. He censured Pope because in "Windsor Forest" he described rural beauty in general and not the beauties peculiar to that forest. Pope lived very near to this forest and had every opportunity to describe the beauties that he actually saw there; but he purposely avoided exact and specific description because he had an erroneous conception of the superiority of a generalized and abstract beauty. Warton, owing to specific description in poetry, thinks the juvenile descriptive poems of Milton are more exalted than any of Pope's, but adds that they are more incorrect. Warton had ideas contrary to those of the classical poets and believed in giving a clear, vivid picture and in referring to objects by their real names.

An essential quality of good poetry is the adapting of sound to the sense. Milton and Spenser, as well as the poets that felt their influence, achieved this virtue, but Pope, different as he was, did not maintain this quality. Consequently his lines lacked to a great degree, the harmony of their verse. A poet judges the harmony of his verse by trying them on his ear, the

tendency being to set them all to the same tune, and this was Pope's error. He has in general, though not always, intermixed the pauses, but he has not varied sufficiently the swell and movement of his lines. He profited very little by the musical versification that had been given to him as an example by Spenser, who was more awake to the beauty of nature than almost any other writer. In imitation of this supreme poet his stanzas have disagreeable and disgusting sounds; and one would almost think that they were a contrast or burlesque of the exquisite stanzas in the "Fairy Queen." Warton cites the "Rambler" as having clearly demonstrated that Pope did fail in this endeavor to adapt sound to the sense.

For many years the one accepted form of verse had been the heroic-couplet. Dryden used it most successfully. Rarely has Pope written in other than heroic couplet, and when he made other attempts it was without much success. This form was still being used during the nineteenth century, yet it was far from being the most favored, and was replaced rather decisively by Keats and other romanticists in their use of the run-over couplet.

Since the models of the Age of Pope used herioc-couplet almost exclusively, it is only natural that other authors followed in their foot steps. Practically all poets used this verse until the romantic writers began to copy from Spenser and Milton.

It is true that Warton thought rhyme was more proper for shorter pieces; for lyric and satiric poems; for pieces where closeness of expression and smartness of style are shown, but it is unusual at this time for anyone to sanction the use of blank

verse in any kind of writing. Thus it was an extraordinary statement for Warton to say, "For subjects of a higher order, where emotion and enthusiasm is seen, or for longer poems blank verse is certainly preferable."

Warton also finds fault with Pope on the score that his poems do not show enough of nature and passion, which our author believes to be eternal, while "wit and satire are only transitory." This view apparently was not shared by Pope, or perhaps he readily forgot it; at least he seldom wrote of nature, and rarely in passionate strains. Consequently, we may expect that his works will not live as long or remain as popular as the works of the "sublime and pathetic" poets. The only instance of the pathetic that Pope has given us is to be found in "Eloisa to Abelard" and "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady." Warton believes that the reputation of Pope in later times will be principally based on "Windsor Forest", "Rape of the Lock," and his "Eloisa to Abelard" for they are endowed with the more lasting qualities.

Pope, although he was the great poet of reason, and the first of ethical authors in verse, held to describing modern manners; and those manners because they were familiar, artificial, and polished, were in their very nature unfit for the high and lofty plane in which Milton and Spenser wrote. He did not allow himself to be carried away by the subject, and what poetical enthusiasm he really possessed was stifled and withheld. Granting that Pope was one of the most correct and exact of poets, he still

lacked in brilliancy, since he seldom succeeded in transporting his reader, and our minds are not affected by his lines with the strong, fine emotions we experience when following the thoughts of Milton and Homer.

In judging Pope's works we are apt to forget that his were by far the best and the most copied of any during his time. In criticizing poetry, he gave his own personal opinions, in which he rarely took into consideration the environment and the conditions under which the work was produced. But Joseph Warton set forth a new idea concerning criticism in his "Essay on Pope" similar to the one Thomas Warton conveys in his "Observations on the 'Fairy Queen' ", and Richard Hurd in his "Letters of Romance and Chivalry." Warton claimed that it was only giving an author due consideration to judge his works in relation to his purpose and his time. If it had been the aim of the poet to instruct and to teach a moral, that work would at once differ from a poem that was merely to entertain and amuse. The country from which he came should not fail to be taken into account. For instance, how absurd it was for Spenser to introduce wolves into England. Culture differs greatly in distinct localities and would undoubtedly influence the writer. Not only the country, but the age in which he lived plays a dominant part in the style and manner of a poet's writing. The poetry written in the classical period differs in many respects from that produced in the age of romanticism, and the differences are largely due to the opposite standards of the age.

Warton concludes, that after criticism has been extensive and the rules of writing^{have} been established, there has never appeared

any very excellent work. This remarkable fact might be accounted for in several different ways. Either the natural powers are confined by caution, which arises from a rigid regard to the dictates of art; or reason has destroyed sentiment and caused our poets to write from the head rather than from the heart; or succeeding writers in striving to surpass the models became forced and affected in their diction and thoughts.

Although Warton cannot definitely account for this statement, he has observed that it has been true in the past and cites examples: - in the case in Greece, in Rome, and in France, after Aristotle, Horace, and Boileau, had written their "Arts of Poetry." In England the rules of the drama were perhaps never more completely understood than in the middle of the Eighteenth Century. Yet what uninteresting, though faultless, tragedies have been seen. The works produced by the three supreme poets was at a time when there was no strict conformation to standards.

How different is this belief from the ideas held by Pope and other classical writers. They believed that a work was only excellent when it adhered to certain guiding principles and strictly conformed to the rules. When a poet did deviate from the standards of the time he was severely criticized and his work had little value. Pope advised that the short cut for a new poet was to consult the critics, who had already drawn up their principles.

Thus in looking at each of Pope's works it is quite evident that those which are satiric, didactic, and moral, outnumber those

with the more natural and pathetic emotions. Because of this, they are not of the most excellent poetry. Nevertheless, there is much to be said for his characteristics of good sense and judgment which undoubtedly were his best. His traits of fancy and imagination, though not entirely lacking as we have observed in "Eloisa to Abelard" and "Rape of the Lock", were indeed not his outstanding personalities. In practicing the leads of French models and especially that of Boileau, of whom he was a most earnest student, he became more than ever, a firm adherent to strict rules. As a result his pieces were polished with utmost care, while he himself came to be known as one of the most exact and correct poets that ever wrote.

Joseph Warton was a learned scholar in his day, and in his "Essay on Pope" we see an exhibition of his knowledge and his appreciation of poetry. To us many of his passages seem trite, but to the reader of his day they would appear original and suggestive. Much which seems to us familiar and obvious might not have been so evident when the essay was written.

This young author was the first to attempt putting Pope in his proper place, and since it was so long ago and the romantic tendencies are so firmly established, we are liable to forget how much we really owe him.

His first volume was published in 1756, but was so in opposition to the opinions of the time, that it was received with universal disfavor. It was not until twenty-six years later,

in 1782, that the second volume of his most noteworthy work appeared. It was dedicated to Young, who held in common with Warton, many of the romantic tendencies.

Warton's first volume, although it was liberally received, was quite generally disputed by the literary men of his time. Nevertheless, his volumes on Pope have been commended for being judicious in their remarks, which were delivered with an air of candor and liberality. The "Critical Review"¹ recommends the first of the works "to the public notice with pleasure" because "it breathes the spirit of true criticism, unbiased by sordid prejudice or partiality." Warton was received somewhat as a sensation because he dared to attack so great a reputation as that of Pope. Those who criticize his first volume speak guardedly concerning it. They think that Warton was too severe in many instances in his criticisms of some of Pope's most beautiful lines, while he is too profuse in his praise of others. He is not justified in some of the criticisms which he makes of the "Pastorals." In contrast to the opinion of Warton, they think the sound of some lines of Pope is admirably adapted to the sense, notwithstanding the demonstration of the "Rambler" which was so convincing to our author. They contend that Warton's assertion, that the sciences cannot exist in a republic, favors too much of the "wild spirit of a democratic enthusiasm, which some people have imbibed from the writings of the Greeks." This spirit, although at first no more than a mere affectation of singularity and superior knowledge,

1 "Critical Review" 1756:--Page 226; Volume I; London, 1756;

may gradually grow into principle and habit, and may daily gain strength until ultimately it would betray the possessor into all the absurdities of an "overheated imagination."¹ They received it, however, because it contains a great number of curious and entertaining anecdotes of literature, and because it is "fraught with a world of erudition, almost too ostentatiously displayed."¹ The "Critical Review" pronounced the essay¹, "a work of taste and learning, animated with many strokes of manly criticism, replete with knowledge, and diversified with a number of amusing incidents and observations." One scholarly and very capable critic remarks that the "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope" is on the whole "a most entertaining and useful miscellany of literary knowledge and candid criticism, containing censure without acrimony, and praise without flattery, and abounding with incidents little known concerning celebrated writers, with remarks upon their characters and works." ²

^B Thus it seemed throughout the age, ^{that} ^A they admired Warton's audacity, his candor, and style; but they clearly hesitated to agree with his statements, and generally opposed his views concerning the stability of Pope's poetry. ^S Dr. Johnson seemed somewhat indifferent to the essay; yet he immediately took issue with Boswell when the latter remarked that Warton had made the most of his cause, for Johnson believed the cause to be of Warton's own making. He even expected that after the first volume Warton would not continue, since he had not been able to convert the world to

1 "Critical Review"--1756; Page 266; Volume I; London, 1756.

2 "Memoirs of Joseph Warton"--Page 33, by Wooll, John; London, 1806.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is not only a scientific one, but also a philosophical one. The scientific aspect of the problem is concerned with the question of how life arose from non-life. The philosophical aspect is concerned with the question of whether life is a necessary part of the universe or whether it is a mere accident. The paper then proceeds to a discussion of the various theories of the origin of life. It is shown that the most plausible theory is that life arose from non-life through a series of chemical reactions. This theory is supported by the discovery of the first fossilized micro-organisms, which are believed to be the earliest forms of life. The paper concludes by stating that the origin of life is a problem that has fascinated mankind for centuries, and that it is one that will continue to fascinate us for many years to come.

his ideas of Pope.¹ This belief was erroneous because in 1782 the second volume appeared. In fact, it had long been expected and even called for by the public; and when it came afforded much entertainment and instruction.²

One writer, Ruffhead, even openly attempted to overthrow Warton's stand, when a few years following the publication of the volume, he wrote of Pope under the patronage of Warburton. His purpose clearly was to defeat Warton's statements and to correct, as he said, Warton's misrepresentations.³ Ruffhead places the purpose of our author as a design to diminish the lustre of Pope's reputation, to degrade him from his rank as a great poet, to deny him any degree of invention, and to set him lower in the eyes and estimation of his admiring readers. But, Ruffhead, though he labored hard, could not depreciate the veracity and sincerity of Warton, nor could he render the critical decisions disputable.¹ Webbe in a letter to Warton agrees that Ruffhead had added nothing new in his work, but had rather lowered his own reputation, and had almost made himself out to be a fool.³

From the volumes themselves it is apparent that Warton was so far from engaging in so ungenerous, so fruitless, and impotent an attempt to lower Pope's reputation, that he has used the most scrupulous caution in speaking on so delicate a subject. And thus while Warton gives due credit to the classical school of writers and duly praises Pope for his satire and fancy, he still remains firm and unshaken in his general contention that the highest art

1 "Boswell's Life of Johnson," Volume II: Hill, George; Oxford, 1887

2 "Critical Review" 1782; London, 1872;

3 "Memoirs of Joseph Warton", --Pages 35 and 36; by Wooll, John; London, 1806;

of poetry could be brought about only by the love and sympathy which the poet has with nature.



CHAPTER II.

Owen Ruffhead's "Life of Pope."

With the passing of the half-century mark came the gradual decline in Pope's popularity. A few of his staunch friends, however, strove to stem this outgoing tide. Ruffhead in all enthusiasm and sincerity endeavored to defend him from the attacks which Warton made upon him in the "Essay." The "Life of Pope" in which Ruffhead discusses at great length the criticisms made by Warton, appeared in 1769.

In this work he explains that the purpose of his history is to relate without bias the incidents of the poet's life. He follows Pope's life history, interweaving it with his writings, and does not omit any just commendations that occasionally appear. Ruffhead boasts that from the criticisms of other authors he will form a general and reliable standard whereby the "nature, force, and extent of Pope's genius" may be measured. He, however, failed to fulfill this boast, and his work has never been considered a standard one.

To gain a clear conception of the genius of Pope, Ruffhead engaged himself in the study of his biography. For, as he said, the life of a personality is depicted within the writings of a

man, so that it is indeed difficult to discriminate between the history of Pope, the man, and Pope, the author. It is a generally conceded principle that the personality of a good writer permeates his works. Thus it is that Ruffhead intended to substantiate his ideas of the greatness of Pope, and thus it was that he intended to refute the derogatory treatise, which had been put forth by Warton.

One of the chief objections which Warton had found to Pope's works was that he imitated and copied other authors. But Ruffhead believed that Warton was biased in his opinions, and that it was Warton's purpose to prejudice Pope's reputation. Ruffhead resented this attitude, and took it upon himself to labor arduously to refute the statements of Warton.

Ruffhead declared that Pope's practice of imitating resulted from his modesty rather than his vanity. Pope perceived how defective his own productions were, and endeavored to mend his composition. Thus he came to be a close follower of the masters, and it was his habit to copy after the "capital strokes of both the ancients and the moderns."

Warton maintained there was nothing new in the "Pastorals." Ruffhead asserted it was no more than Pope had premised, when he said with all modesty and sincerity in his own justification of imitation, "But after all, if there is anything of merit in the 'Pastorals', it is to be attributed to some good old authors, whose works as I had leisure to study, so I hope I have not wanted care to imitate."

It was the opinion of Ruffhead that although Pope did openly imitate the ancient writers in his "Pastorals", yet he did so with the result of ameliorating their works. In some few instances, however, he has not imitated, but has literally translated from the original. It was his delight to imitate those stories or passages which particularly pleased him, but he did it in such a way as to make them peculiarly his own. Not only did he improve the passages he imitated but gave many that may be justly deemed original.

Ruffhead found fault with Warton because he unjustly accused Pope of lacking in the qualities of invention and imagination. He censured him for not considering more carefully the meaning of these two words before passing criticism on Pope. Warton's statements that Pope was "an excellent improver, if no inventor" and "that Pope showed more imagination in his 'Rape of the Lock' than in all his other works taken together", were most exasperating to our author. But, although he criticized Warton on these declarations, he does not in any substantial way reconstruct the poet's reputation.

He endeavored to belittle Warton's methods in this way, perhaps, purposing to defend Pope. He ridiculed Warton for failing to define his words concisely, and seemed unable to take issue with him because he did not understand their meanings. However, Ruffhead was hesitant in making his attack. He excused himself on the plea, that although defining words and terms was dangerous

in writing, yet one who criticized and disputed an established reputation, should and ought to proceed, only after designating the meanings of the terms he employed.

Invention and imagination themselves are very closely allied, but are, nevertheless, somewhat different in form. Writers often find it difficult to discriminate between them. Ruffhead thinks that Warton confused their meanings and that he attributed the power of creating to the imagination, when it rightfully belonged to invention. Thus Ruffhead disputed Warton's conception of the meaning of the word invention. He also arduously endeavored to refute the stand which the critic took on Pope's claim to originality and invention.

In discussing the "Essay on Man", Warton began by denying Pope the power of invention. This indeed is opposed to Ruffhead's conception. The ability of the poet to improve a borrowed thought until it became practically original was rated by Ruffhead as the quality of invention. He believed where there was "a just drawing, an artful grouping, and a strong expression," in a well chosen subject, it was evidence of a strong pretense to the quality of invention. Therefore, Pope should be attributed with the power of invention, since he was a just claimant to these qualities.

There was in his works so much concise and logical reasoning, and so much of poetic foresight that he seemed quite original. His images too, which he used to illustrate passages, were unique and striking. The air of novelty does indeed permeate every sentiment; and human art is so excellently displayed that Pope

seems rightfully entitled to the attribute of originality.

Particularly is this true in the sylphs, which, according to Ruffhead's assertion, were first brought into poetical machinery by Pope. He gives the poet the first honors in discovering the relation between imaginary things of the air and "light fantastic objects he intended" to ridicule. And because he distinctly believed such a power to be a trait of invention, he is surprised that Warton denied him that quality.

There is a decided difference in the opinions of Ruffhead and Warton regarding the description of Pope. Warton criticized the descriptions of Pope as being too general and indistinct; but even if this be true, Ruffhead argues, it does not lessen Pope's superiority when all circumstances are considered. For when Pope describes a scene he writes as he finds or conceives; and if the region of which he writes is barren and extensive, so then would his lines contain but meager and indistinct words of description. Furthermore, he maintains that descriptive poetry is but a subordinate in the rank of poetical excellence; so he finds it unnecessary to defend Pope's inability to describe vividly.

Warton himself said that the office of description was to "brighten and adorn good sense." To employ it then merely as a brilliant coloring in a poetic setting is to waste an agency which can be made to represent and illustrate nature's most wonderful beauties. Our poet himself thought that mere descriptive poetry contained nothing substantial, and he humorously

compared these efforts to the absurdity of a "feast of sauces." And as an effect of his belief we find in "Windsor Forest" that he has observed description by making it the covering for good sense. Often where one is expecting to see only the paintings and beautiful colorings, the backgrounds are seen to be moral sentences and instructions. Thus we are often surprised by virtue, and things please us where they are least expected.

But Ruffhead does admit that Warton was justified in saying that a few of the images introduced were not applicable to any place in particular. They are rather descriptive of beauty in general, than of the peculiar beauties of "Windsor Forest." On the other hand, it must be remembered that the forest at that time afforded but few images which were peculiarly characteristic of it. There were no magnificent lakes and cascades there for him to describe, nor were there the beauties which have since become a famous attribute of the forest. But those few beauties which were peculiar to it have been described; and the descriptions of the other images which were not characteristic of the forest alone, have been admirably done. Ruffhead considered them to be indeed excellent in their kind, and that they proved Pope to be possessed of a prominent talent of descriptive poetry.

In one instance Warton preferred a Greek image to that of Pope, because of the "pastoral wildness, delicacy, and uncommonness of thought" it contained. Such a choice seemed strange to Ruffhead, for he believed that the perfection of pastoral

images was to be simple and quite natural. Pope's image was of this type, but, nevertheless, plaintive and pathetic, and expressed with beauty and harmony of numbers.

With evidence in so many instances which Warton himself has applauded, it must be left with the reader to determine the correctness of the declaration that "descriptive poetry was by no means the shining talent of Pope." It seemed to Ruffhead that Warton would have displayed his fairness and ability as a critic far better had he declared instead, "that the studious cultivation of descriptive poetry was far below the poet's comprehension and sublime genius."

A prevalent criticism which Warton found against Pope was based on the fact, that the poet did not excel in the sublime and pathetic species of poetry. He said for this reason Pope could not be rated in the first class of Poets. Ruffhead admits that these qualities have been classed as most excellent. He believes this is due to their appeal being more universal. But often sublimity and pathos are overworked and become unnatural.

Ruffhead feels that true art must accomplish a designated moral purpose; that it should do more than merely excite the emotions, for a man is after all a creature constituted of certain reasoning powers, as well as of passions. Both of the attributes of man must therefore be played to. It should be the aim of all poetry then to enlarge the understanding and to increase the mentality of the reader, as well as to play upon the emotions.

Ruffhead states that imagination pictures things more wonderful than they actually exist, and maintains that the sublime and pathetic are well adapted to imaginative writing. But he believes it is fairly easy to write imaginative poetry,--to employ the sublime and pathetic; but it is a very difficult task to describe nature as the eye sees it,--to disregard the sublime and pathetic, and yet make the verses pleasing.

Poetry is allowed more liberty in the use of imaginative affectation than any other form of composition. But disregarding this, Ruffhead still firmly believes that the poem must do more than delight the imagination alone. It must be directed to some worthy purpose, either moral or intellectual. Unless it is so purposed the composition cannot be esteemed of the highest order.

Assuming, however, that these qualities are the most excellent species of poetry, Ruffhead questions whether Pope's excellence in the sublime and pathetic can be denied. He again endeavors to cast reflections upon Warton's "Essay" by suggesting defects in the criticism of the essayist. He accuses Warton of judging Pope's ability as a poet by using the opening of "Epistle on the Characters of Men." It is quite unpoetical to exhibit much spirit at the start, and it should not be expected at the very outset of a poem. The beginning should rather be "sedate, unornamental, and unfigurative."¹ Here, again, Ruffhead confuses his line of argument, for immediately following his criticism of Warton's selection of an example, he himself cites the opening passage of a poem to exhibit the talent of Pope, which is at

1. Critical Review, 1769; Vol.XXVII; London, 1769.

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once dramatic and startling. Again, to show Warton's partiality in criticizing the poet, Ruffhead argues that it was almost burlesque to challenge a comparison between one of Pope's familiar poems and two of the most finished epic pieces. He says it was most unfair, but does not support his statement in any way. The "Critical Review" agreeing with Warton's view, substantiates the comparison of the essayist, and believes he was quite justified in employing such examples. This, it says, was the only available means since Pope had no epics which could have been used. Moreover, Warton chose one of the pieces in which¹ "Atterbury and Bolingbroke declared his chief strength and talents peculiarly lay."

Ruffhead appeared to be confused with Warton's criticisms. He found no basis for the statement made by the critic, that Pope had none of the sublime and pathetic. To be sure, the poet wrote nothing which possessed those qualities throughout. But yet within the works of Pope, there are a "thousand passages in which the sublime and pathetic are carried out in their utmost force and perfection." These may be found in "Windsor Forest", some of which Warton himself commended. He further cites numerous passages of sublimity in "The Essay on Man", and the fourth book of the "Dunciad." The verses to the "Memory of an Unfortunate Lady," and his "Eloisa to Abelard" particularly show the tender and pathetic feelings. The "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" has been esteemed the most sublime of his lesser compositions. If Pope had given no other example of the sublime, the

1. Critical Review, 1769; Vol XXVII; London, 1769.

"Messiah" alone would have proven the sublimity of his genius.

Ruffhead is indefinite also as to another probable reason for Pope not excelling in these qualities. Warton, he said, may have considered too seriously the fact that Pope made use of sublimity and pathos only occassionally. But this would, in the mind of Ruffhead, prove to strengthen a poet's claim for the talent. He contended that it was sufficient for a poet to exhibit his genius in a mode of composition such as description, the sublime and pathetic, only when the occassion arose.

The fact that Pope himself has given his reasons for not writing in the sublime and pathetic species furnished Ruffhead another argument. He said, the poet's "strong sense and moral cast of mind" inclined him rather to the didactic and moral compositions. As a result many critics have confined his ability to those, and have inferred that he did not excel in other types.

With all this discussion by Ruffhead concerning Warton's criticism of Pope; that the essayist frequently only selected detached passages, and chose openings as good examples of the poet's work, we still feel that he has not proved his point. For there are good reasons for every supposed defect considered by Ruffhead. He further tried to subdue the essayist when he complained that "a mind with a set opinion seizes only those particulars which favor its rash conclusions." But obviously this argument does not hold, for it is conceded that Warton was not of an invincible opinion concerning Pope. The critic did, however, question Pope's right to the title of poet, but he did

so with an unprejudiced and unbiased mind. Then Ruffhead endeavored to combat the mind of Warton by defining the attributes of a good poet, and showing Pope's adaptability to such qualities.

It was in the "Rape of the Lock" that Pope appeared to be a real poet. He did, to be sure, attain some reputation by the style of his "Essay on Man" in which he displayed "such an uncommon compass of learning, such extensive knowledge of human nature, and such strength of judgment," but the full force of his poetic genius was not known, nor felt, until it was observed in this celebrated poem. Ruffhead said that all the powers of his talents were there displayed. His "beauty of description, richness of invention, and the glow of his imaginative powers display themselves" in the "most exquisite harmony of numbers."

Ruffhead earnestly believed that if the writers whom Warton commended for their wit and good sense had had the harmony of numbers which Pope possessed, there would have been no doubt as to their right to the title of true poets. Since Pope had all of these qualities, his title of poet could not justly be denied by any one.

Our author considered Pope's versification a magic which never failed to charm the reader to a degree of fascination. In his works there is a genius of style, which is an indispensable factor in the most excellent poetic composition. And it is to these qualities that Pope owes his superiority. He particularly possessed a ready supply of expression, and a diction always correct and splendid. Here does Pope truly show himself to be a

great poet. For the style, rather than the matter, is the true "distinguishing characteristic of poetry."

Ruffhead tried to leave the impression that Pope's merit was so high above the average standard of writers, that it was beyond all adverse criticism by the learned world. The poet, he said, was one of the few whose fame was so firmly rooted as not "to need the prop of partiality to support it, or to be in danger of being shakened or undermined by prejudice or caprice." And of these few Pope was capitally distinguished. But even so, our poet suffered the adversities and fates of every man who started from the common crowd of life. His rising fame, however, soon soared above the reach of the ignorance and envy of those who "waged war against his merits." And his talents, fostered by his benign and ingenious friends, daily became greater and stronger, until he excelled in almost all species of poetical composition.

The "Life of Pope" seemed to be unfortunate in its appearance. The book was received almost wholly with ill-grace. In a characteristic statement, Johnson expressed himself very strongly;¹ "Ruffhead knows nothing of Pope nor of poetry." Of course such a statement must be taken liberally. Nevertheless, there were numerous criticisms which seemed to effuse from fair minds, that designated Ruffhead's work as somewhat of a nonentity. One critic has said, "there are very few material facts in the 'Life of Pope', but what may be found either in the notes of bishop Warburton, or in Warton's "Essay". It is remarked in the

1. "Memoirs of Warton:" Wooll, John: London, 1806.

"Memoirs of Warton" that the work is¹ "a performance in which censure becomes harsh and at times trivially minute;" a work which is¹ "damned with faint praise."

The "Monthly Review" also discussed the work in a terse manner. Ruffhead believed that people became curious at the successes of the few who attained heights by their talents, and that the public desired to learn of their history. He said that nature endowed men with equal faculties. These declarations are, in the opinion of the "Review," somewhat far fetched. It contended that very few have adopted the ²"notion that the faculties of men are all equal." It claimed that very few people would become interested enough in Pope's history to be stimulated to the study of the "Life" in order that they might become poets. In all probability they would read it primarily through curiosity.

Another angle of criticism which came very close to censure appeared in the "Critical Review." Ruffhead, it said, thought that Warton's "Essay" stood in the way of his own work, and rendered his own undertaking superfluous. This was a veritable truth, for the "Review" impartially stated that hard as Ruffhead had worked, he did not "depreciate the well received "Essay", nor did he "render it's critical decisions disputable."

It is evident that many of Ruffhead's efforts were misdirected, or in fact, very often became analogous to those of Warton. The essayist said that Pope excelled in the moral, satiric, and didactic species of composition. Ruffhead declared that Pope's "strong sense and moral cast of mind inclined him

1. "Memoirs of Warton." Wooll, John; London, 1806;
2. "Critical Review;" London, 1775.

principally to cultivate the didactic and moral."

The critics of Ruffhead would even advise him to study the art of writing poetry, notably Horace's "Art of Poetry," before he endeavored to write another critical work. They expressed their disappointment in his history, and implied that he was ill qualified as a biographer.

Then too, they are dissatisfied in the unfair way he treated Warton. He should not have maintained such an acrimonious attitude toward him, whom he lauds in the opening of the "Life of Pope," and in whose footsteps he so closely followed throughout his work. They censured Ruffhead for his many superficial arguments and his petty exclamations, such as: "What various beauties are comprehended in these lines," and "the following lines are inimitably fine." And, almost as a climax, they advised Ruffhead to wait until Warton could at least give his classification of Pope in a second volume, before he endeavored to establish his reputation.

Thus from the arguments, the statements and declamations which Ruffhead presented in defense of Pope, we draw rather an unconscious reflection upon his own reputation. And from the reviews and references made to Ruffhead's work, we gather the attitude of the people as being not hostile toward Pope, but rather lethargetic. Ruffhead's "Life of Pope" was received more as a spent bullet, hitting, rebounding, and doing no damage. Nor did it in the least stop the ebbing of Pope's reputation.

CHAPTER III.

Near the Close of the Century.

As early as the Age of Pope, tendencies away from Classicism had unconsciously crept in. The younger generation of poets reverted to the early English writers for inspiration and imitation. In following Milton and Spenser they soon replaced the heroic-couplet by blank verse and the Spenserian stanza. The rational temper of the Augustans, in time gave way to the emotional qualities as displayed by writers of the Graveyard school and of the Gothic school of romance. The revival of interest in the middle ages appeared in various forms such as; Walpole's "Strawberry Hill Castle." and "Castle of Otranto," the "Rowley Poems" of Chatterton, Macpherson's "Ossian," and Percy's "Reliques." The earlier romantic writers did not purposely rebel against the classical school, but they were so filled with the love for "landscape effects in poetry" and a passion for "elemental forces of nature" that they unconsciously wrote romantic poetry.

Just as the Age of Pope was not wholly pseudo-classical, so was the period from 1750 to 1800 not entirely given over to romanticism. This movement made great progress in the latter half of the eighteenth century, but there remained such men as

Charles Churchill, Colman, Ruffhead, Whitehead, John Wilcot, William Gifford, James Pye, and Johnson, who defended Pope and Classicism. However, these men were of small importance compared with Young, Cowper, Gray, Burns, Bowles, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and other romanticists. They did, however, have their place; Johnson was one of the big men of his time.

Johnson was the chief advocate of Pope and was called the "watchdog of classicism." Boswell said, "The Life of Pope" was written by Johnson *con amore*, both from the early possession which that writer had taken of his mind, and from the pleasure which he must have felt in forever silencing all attempts to lessen his poetical fame, by demonstrating his excellence, and pronouncing that he was a poet.¹"

Johnson was the combatant of the old Augustan school of Pope. His arguments and sympathies were continually in favor of loftiness and conformance to rules. He believed in adhering to all the conventions of classical technique, and it was his desire that the poets should submit to the old discipline, and imitate the acknowledged models. The style and versification of Pope were greatly admired by Johnson. He once said, "Sir, a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope. That power must undoubtedly be allowed its due share in enhancing the value of his captivating composition.²" The "Pastorals" he considered but "poor things," but thought the versification was excellent.

1. Boswell's "Life of Johnson;" Hill, George B; Vol.IV,pg.46; Oxford 1887;
2. Boswell's "Life of Johnson;" Hill, George B; Vol.IV,pg.46; Oxford 1887;

Other writers could perhaps produce new images and sentiments, but it seemed to Johnson not only unwise, but a folly to attempt any further improvement of versification. Like Goldsmith, he disliked the "erroneous innovation," the "disgusting solemnity" of blank verse, and used all of his influence against it. In conversing with Boswell concerning Dr. Adam Smith, Johnson said, "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I would have hugged him.¹"

Johnson praised Pope because of his almost exclusive use of the heroic-couplet, and his manner was such as to expose him to few attacks. It was the method of Pope to correct, beautify, and polish his verses. With such faculties, Johnson asserted, he excelled every other writer in "poetical prudence."

It seemed almost incomprehensible to Johnson that Joseph Warton should question Pope's title to poet. It was Dr. Johnson's statement, "After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only show the narrowness of the definer; though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look around upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wealth of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."²

1. Boswell's Life of Johnson; Hill, George B; Oxford, 1887;

2. Boswell's Life of Johnson; Hill, George B; Oxford, 1887;
Vol.IV, Page 46;

Johnson greatly respected Pope because of the latter's strong adherence to Augustan ideas. He was especially fond of the didactic side of Pope and this he strove to imitate. Johnson, like Pope, possessed the same idea of loftiness in poetry. Neither writer appreciated natural scenery, while on the other hand, both possessed a deep love for the city. Pope's dislike for the country is obvious when he said in a letter to Mrs. J. Cowper, "I wish you may love the town (which the author of these lines cannot immoderately do) these many years. It is time enough to like, or affect to like, the country, when one is out of love with all but one's self.¹" Johnson is still continuing the idea of Pope when, about sixty years later, he said that the best sight for a Scotchman's eyes was the road that led to London?²

Dr. Johnson not only appreciated Pope's style and ideas, but his works as well. He considered Pope's "Essay on Criticism," though an early work, as one of his greatest productions. In selection of material, and novelty of arrangement, it was a most excellent work of didactic composition. Had he written nothing else it would have placed him, in the opinion of Johnson, among the leading critics and poets.

"Eloisa to Abelard" was especially favored by Johnson. He doubted whether in all the world there could be found a work in which there were so many good qualities. He received more enjoyment from "The Rape of the Lock" than from any of Pope's other works, because it was "the most airy, the most ingenious, and the

1. Pope's Works: Elwin and Courthope. Vol IV, pg.20; London, 1886.

2. Phelps, William Lyons; The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement; Page 13; Boston, 1893;

most delightful of all his compositions.¹"

As a result of this sincere admiration and high regard, Johnson became a strong defender of Pope's reputation. No one could speak slightingly of him without being sharply refuted by Johnson. When Ramsay commented that the poetry of Pope was more highly admired in his life-time than after his death, Johnson replied; "Sir, Pope's poetry has been as much admired since his death as during his life; it has only not been so much talked of, but that is owing to its being now more distant, and people having other things to talk of. In order to be in fashion, better works are neglected for want of time."²

When Pope was accused of simply putting the "Essay on Man" into verse, which was really composed by Lord Bolingbroke, Johnson's defense was, "Pope may have gotten something from Bolingbroke, but we are sure that the poetical imagery which makes a great part of the poem, was Pope's own."³ Thus it was when Boswell mentioned the vulgar saying that Pope's "Homer" was not a good representation of the original. He at once refuted, "It was the greatest work of its kind that had ever been produced."⁴

Johnson's ardent admiration for Pope is excellently expressed in the following lines written by Lewis. These Johnson praised highly and repeated them with enthusiasm.

- 1: Johnson's Lives of the English Poets; Hill, George B; Vol.III, Page 228: Oxford:1905.
2. Boswell's Life of Johnson; Hill, George B; Vol.III, Page 256: Oxford;1887.
3. Boswell's Life of Johnson; Hill, George B; Vol.III, Page 402; Oxford: 1887.
4. Boswell's Life of Johnson; Hill, George B; Vol.III, Page 256: Oxford: 1887.

"While malice, Pope, denies they page
Its own celestial fire
While critics, and while bards in rage
Admiring, won't admire.

While wayward pens thy worth assail,
And envious tongues decry;
These times, though many a friend bewail,
These times bewail not I.

But when the world's loud praise is thine,
And spleen no more shall blame;
When with thy Homer thou shalt shine
In one established fame!

When none shall rail, and every lay
Devote a wreath to thee;
That day (for come it will) that day
Shall I lament to see.¹"

Lord Chesterfield was another representative of Classicism in the eighteenth century. Many of his views coincided with those of Johnson. Even though they had mutual admiration for Pope, Chesterfield was disliked by Johnson. It was once said by Dr. Johnson, "This man, I thought had been a lord among wits, but I find he is only a wit among lords," and of his letters, "they teach the morals of a courier, and the manners of a dancing master."²

Chesterfield was personally acquainted with Pope and knew his bad, as well as his good qualities. He believed that the deformity of Pope's body caused his satire and thus it should be excused. He admitted that Pope was unnatural in his conversation, and always attempted humor and wit. Quite frequently the poet used it unsuccessfully and out of season.

1. Boswell's Life of Johnson: Mill, George B; Vol III; Page 256: Oxford: 1887.
2. Boswell's Life of Johnson: Hill, George B; Vol. I; Page 266: Oxford: 1887.

Lord Chesterfield believed that Pope, along with other great leaders, helped to make the English language. It was his opinion that, "Pope's works spoke sufficiently for themselves; they would live as long as letters and taste should remain in that country, and be more and more admired, as envy and resentment should subside.¹"

Oliver Goldsmith possessed a similar appreciation of Pope. He expressed a disgust for his contemporaries who formed the romantic school. Although he was a follower of Classicism, often romanticism unconsciously appeared in his works. Johnson kept a strict eye on him, and "he sometimes seems to have written as if Dr. Johnson were looking over his shoulder.²"

His admiration for Pope was sincere, for he believed the poet had a deep insight into the human heart. His attitude toward Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard" was for the most part favorable. This is clearly evidenced by his words. "The harmony of numbers in this poem is very fine. It is rather drawn out to too tedious a length, although the passions vary with great judgment. It may be considered as superior to anything in the epistolary way; and the many translations which have been made of it into the modern languages are in some measure a proof of this.³" Of his "Rape of the Lock", Goldsmith stands in accord with Johnson and Chesterfield, in pronouncing it Pope's most excellent work. He praised it even more enthusiastically than

1. Maty, M.: Miscellaneous Works of Chesterfield: Vol. I; Pg. 14; London: 1778.
2. Perry, Thomas Sergeant: English Literature in the Eighteenth Century; Page 396; New York: 1883.
3. Goldsmith, Oliver: Beauties of English Poetry. (Moulton, Charles): Library of Literary Criticism. Vol. III. Pg. 168; New York; 1910.

the radical Johnson in this statement. "This seems to be Mr. Pope's most finished production, and is perhaps the most perfect in our language. It exhibits stronger powers of imagination, more harmony of numbers, and a greater knowledge of the world, than any other of this poet's work; and it is probable if our country were called upon to show a specimen of their genius to foreigners, this would be the work here fixed upon.¹"

Gray, like Young and Cowper, in his early life was classical, but changed to a romanticist in his later years. From his youth he had imitated Dryden, while at the same time he had conceived Pope as being one of the finest writers we ever had.

In 1742 Gray wrote three odes, all of which showed the Augustan spirit. But even at this early stage of his career he wrote a sonnet which was markedly a romantic form of poetry. In the middle of the century his "Elegy of a Country Church-yard" appeared. Influences of other works were manifest in this piece; notably Brown's "Urn Burial," Parnell's "Night Piece," Blair's "Grave," and Young's "Night Thoughts." The "Elegy" was the climax of the Grave-yard school, and although it was not entirely romantic, might be termed the turning point in that direction.

His "Progress of Poesy," a Pindaric ode, appeared in 1754. It was the most imaginative of all Gray's poetry, and marked him as a romanticist. Of it there were numerous criticisms. Johnson said concerning it: "He who could do nothing

1. Goldsmith, Oliver: Beauties of English Poetry: (Moulton: Library of Literary Criticism: Vol.III. Page 161; New York,1910)

else could write like Pindar¹."

Gray constantly grew farther away from Classicism, and in romantic tendencies surpassed his age. He cultivated an interest in foreign peoples, using Norse and Welsh themes, which had not been characteristic of Augustan writers.

His writings not only became romantic, but his sympathies as well. He liked Walpole's "Castle of Otranto;" was a warm friend of Hurd's; and he himself said he had "gone mad" about "Ossian." His feeling for nature was exceptionally deep. He preferred country to city life, loved melancholy, and appreciated wild and romantic scenery.

The world, in the main, has been kind to Gray, but he was criticized unjustly by Johnson. It was Dr. Johnson's opinion that Gray did not rank high as a poet. He called him a "mechanical poet,"² and with his usual frankness compared his odes to, "forced plants raised in a hot bed; and they are poor plants; they are but cucumbers after all."³ When Boswell suggested Gray might be dull in company but not in poetry, Johnson replied, "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way that made many people think him great."⁴

In spite of all these harsh rebukes, Gray has "influenced his age more than the age influenced him."⁵ He should

1. Beers, Henry A: History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century; Page 54: New York:1910.
2. Boswell's Life Of Johnson:Hill, George B:Vol.II,Pg.327:Oxford,1887
3. Boswell's Life Of Johnson:Hill, George B:Vol.IV,Pg.13: Oxford,1887
4. Boswell's Life Of Johnson:Hill, George B:Vol.II,Pg.327:Oxford,1887
5. Phelps, William Lyons: The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement: Page 170: Boston:1893.

hold a more important place in the romantic movement than is usually assigned to him, for according to Edmund Gosse, Gray was the most important poetical figure between Pope and Wordsworth.

Although Horace Walpole was one of the first novelists to advance romanticism, he was at heart an Augustan. He considered Pope his favorite writer; and in his own verses used a style similar to that of the poet. He regarded the works of Pope as excellent and praised them highly. The "Dunciad," he said, is blemished by the offensive image of the games; but the poetry appears to be admirable; and although the fourth Book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others; it has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal.¹ In one of his letters to Bentley he remarked concerning the "Rape of the Lock," "besides the originality of a great part of the invention; it is a standard of graceful writing."² He spoke of Pope's rich English and at the poet's death remarked, "Pope and poetry are dead."³

He had great respect for Gray but did not approve of his romantic writings. He expressed disgust for "Ossian;" was contemptuous of Spenser; and considered Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" "forty times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian Opera-books."⁴ Notwithstanding all

1. Toynbee, Mrs. Paget: Letters of Horace Walpole: Vol. XIII. Pg. 283; Oxford: 1905.
2. Toynbee, Mrs. Paget: Letters of Horace Walpole: Vol. XIII: Pg. 284; Oxford: 1905.
3. Toynbee, Mrs. Paget: Letters of Horace Walpole: Vol. II: Pg. 18; Oxford: 1903.
4. Toynbee, Mrs. Paget: Letters of Horace Walpole: Vol. III: Pg. 288; Oxford, 1903.

his opposition to romantic tendencies and his great respect for Pope, Walpole unconsciously furthered romanticism.

William Cowper (1731-1800) showed a mixture of classical and romantic tendencies in his literature, but in the main he was an anti-classicist. He used the heroic-couplet to a small extent, while blank-verse he employed abundantly. His antagonism for Johnson was personal and intense; he had high admiration for Milton. Having so great a fondness for blank verse and so high a regard for the poetry of Milton, it was not surprising that he censured Pope for "making poetry a mere mechanic art."¹ Gray and Johnson lauded Pope's "Homer," but when Cowper and a friend compared Pope's translation with the original they soon discovered that there was "hardly a thing in the world of which Pope was so utterly destitute as a taste for Homer."² Cowper considered Pope a disgusting letter writer, and except in very few cases, "the most disagreeable maker of epistles he ever met with."³ He did allow him the title of poet, but much preferred Dryden. Cowper was an important figure between Pope and Wordsworth, and did much to further romanticism.

George Crabbe (1754-1832) came at a time when the reputation of Pope was "hanging in the balance." The new literary taste of romanticism was gradually growing, and it was questionable whether the severe standards of the Augustan age could satisfy it. A distinct division can hardly be made between the

1. Beers, Henry A: History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century; Page 53: New York: 1910.
2. Boswell's Life of Johnson: Hill, George B: Vol. III. Page 257: Oxford, 1887.
3. Wright, Thomas: Correspondence of William Cowper: Vol. I: Pg. 196; New York; 1904.

old and the new movement; but Crabbe seems to come between the two ages.

In the new school of poetry the works of Crabbe gave the first evidences of the realistic movement. In his earlier work he preceded Cowper and Wordsworth. He discarded the use of conventional imagery and strictly attended to the realities of scenery. Throughout his life he had a keen sense of observation, and he pictured life as he saw it. He gave only the bare truths without fancy. His conception of life tends toward pessimism, and, as Francis Palgrave said, "nature with him is seen in her bare simplicity,--austere often, sometimes ugly in her nakedness!" Hazlitt criticized him because he wrote about the country and the country life, "only to take the charm out of it, and to dispel the illusion, the glory, and the dream, which have lowered over it in golden verse from Theocritus to Cowper.²"

Crabbe had a depth of feeling and a genuine pathos which Pope did not possess. In description Crabbe wrote what he saw; Pope described the outstanding things. The satire in his works is also distinctive from Pope's. He had a clear understanding of human nature and a sympathetic feeling for the frailties of man. Because of these conceptions of life he did not satirize his personal enemies as Pope did; but he aimed his criticism at mankind in general. Crabbe's satire has no similiarity with the "fiercely personal and bitter attacks" of Pope, except in style.

1. Palgrave, Francis: Landscape in Poetry.(Charles Moulton: Library of Literary Criticism)Vol.V;Pg.177: New York, 1910;
2. Waller and Glover:Hazlitt's Collected Works:Vol.IV,Pg.351: London, 1902.

Unlike his differences in realism and satire, Crabbe's style shows a predominant influence of Pope. His verses were written in the heroic-couplet, and in some of his early poems he adopted the didactic method. He was not only a faithful disciple of the couplet, but was also an adherent to the "shut" couplet. Later in his life he did deviate somewhat from the standards of Classicism, committing errors which Pope would have severely condemned. But on the whole, Crabbe consistently followed the heroic-couplet, and Pope governed the meter of his verse throughout his life.

So it was that Crabbe, influenced both by classicism and romanticism, stood "peculiarly alone in his generation." He successfully combined the characteristics of the Augustan Age and those of the Lake school, and was very important at this turning point in English literature.

With the influx of revolutionary forces in the latter part of the eighteenth century came new impulses in the literary movement. To these the English poets frequently responded. Especially was this new spirit apparent in the works of Robert Burns—almost to the degree of enthusiasm. Some writers have been admired for their polish; others respected for their philosophy; Robert Burns was loved for his whole-hearted, "blood-warm" verses. The Scotch bard sang in an unrestrained tune and with unsuppressed emotion. His poetry was distinctive in its fervor, and in its striking simplicity. When we compare the dignified and polished verses of Pope with the spontaneous outbursts of Burns, the

classical works seem almost "cold and pedantic." Burns loved nature. He was concerned in the common things of life. Because of these interests he described life as it actually appeared to him; he depicted nature in the most realistic manner.

In the world of literature Cowper is often termed the "dawn" of a new era; Burns is termed the "sunrise." In his poetry the Scotchman bred the naturalness and conviviality of his personality. His impulsive nature seemed to fling aside the standards set by the Augustan writers. None of the reformers as yet had dared to be passionate in their writings. Cowper had attempted no passion but that of "religious despair." Crabbe's passion was limited to a "grim contemplation of the miseries and disappointments of life;¹" while all the passion of Blake "had conveyed itself into the channel of mystical dreaming." Burns was the premier in passionate writings. He gave vent to the "passion of war, passion of conviviality," and above all to the "passion of love."² In voicing passion he has never been surpassed by the greatest poets. This emotional warmth of verse was one of his marked contributions to the age.

Not only did his freedom loving nature rebel against oppression, but it caused him to disregard the conventions and rules which had been established by the Augustan leaders. His verse did not conform to the models; it took on a new form of freedom. In his verse form he depended on his Scotch predecessors in preference to the classical models. He imitated freely

1. Saintsbury, George: A History of Nineteenth Century Literature; Page 17; New York: 1909.
2. Saintsbury, George: A History of Nineteenth Century Literature; Page 15; New York: 1909.

from Hamilton and Fergusson, but particularly did he take from Ramsay. In following these men he wrote with ease, for he was a master in the vernacular--a style which was innate. The superiority of his Scotch over his English works proved him the better in his own tongue. When he attempted to write in the heroic-couplet the product was clumsy and was "sprinkled with touches of natural observation" - quite foreign to Pope. His spirit of freedom seemed to prevent him from successfully imitating the Augustan writers.

Thus the dissention from the reign of classicism can obviously be traced. The offerings of the Scotch bard seemed to satisfy a desire in the mind of the age for something different; and, at least for a time, the free, passionate, and unrestrained poetry of "Bobbie" Burns abounded in popularity.

William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850) was as much an anti-Augustan as Cowper and Burns had been. His "Fourteen Sonnets, written chiefly on Picturesque Spots during a Journey" show that Bowles had little sympathy with Pope, because the style in itself is reactionary. Wordsworth and Coleridge were both fascinated with this work, and in the latter poet it aroused a wild enthusiasm. All the poetical works of Bowles were simple, earnest, and true, pervaded throughout with a warm and tender sentiment. The mild qualities of his poetry are a great contrast to the sincerity and pugnacity of his prose.

Bowles is not remembered for his poetic works, but like Boswell to Johnson, he is known through his edition of Pope.

This edition (1806) appeared in ten volumes, with a sketch of his life and criticisms on his poetry. Ruffhead and Johnson had written a Life in praise of Pope; Joseph Warton, with Bowles following in his footsteps, wrote in criticism of the poet. The Life prefixed to this edition brought about a violent controversy on the question of Pope's title to poet. Bowles placed him in the same class to which Warton had assigned him,--at the head of the second rank poets. Bowles stood alone in this controversy against Campbell, Byron, Roscoe, Octavius Gilchrist, and the "Quarterly Review," until later when Southey, Hazlitt, and 'Blackwood's Magazine' aided him. William Clark Russel gives a very concise account of this quarrel. "Mr. Bowles wrote a book upon Pope. Mr. Campbell abused Mr. Bowles's book upon Pope. Mr. Bowles wrote an answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope. Lord Byron wrote a letter to certain stars in Albermarle street in an answer to Mr. Bowles's answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope. Jeremy Bentham, Esq., wrote a letter to Lord Byron about Lord Byron's letter to certain stars in Albermarle street, in answer to Mr. Bowles's answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope. Here the controversy ended, leaving each disputant more thoroughly satisfied with his own judgment.¹"

Although it has often been urged that Bowles was biased against Pope, it is quite agreed that he was thoroughly versed in his subject. His doctrine indeed did not waver under the

1. Russel, William Clark: The Book of Authors (Moulton, Charles; Library of Literary Criticism:) New York: 1910.

attacks of his opponents. And ultimately Bowles maintained his purpose in establishing his three contentions, that "Pope was only at the head of the second rank of poets--that, as a man, he was guilty of many meannesses, and had a prurient imagination and pen--and that the objects of artificial life are, per se, less fitted for the purposes of poetry than those of nature, and than the passions of the human heart.¹" Throughout the entire edition an extreme anti-Augustan attitude was prevalent, and the work was a strong factor in the decline of Pope's reputation.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) had little sympathy with the school of Pope. He did not agree with the Augustans in regard to diction, to the purpose of poetry, nor to their conception of realism. The Classical writers considered it the purpose of poetry to instruct, and quite late in the eighteenth century Samuel Johnson held strict didactic views. They wrote for the higher classes rather than for all mankind. These ideas of Pope and his imitators were quite different from those held by Wordsworth. The poet laureate believed the object of poetry was to please; to amuse not only conventional man, but universal man. In speaking of the purpose of poetry Wordsworth said, "The poet writes under one restriction, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being, possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a man."²

1. Gilfillan, George: Political Works of William Lisle Bowles: Vol.II: Page 15; Edinburgh: 1855.
2. George, A.J: Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry: Page 16; Boston: 1892.

When Wordsworth first began to write he had a tendency to imitate the models. Soon, however, he rebelled against mere forms and conventions. He went so far as to say, "my purpose is to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men----I have taken as much pains to avoid what is usually called poetic diction as others ordinarily take to produce it."¹ Wordsworth followed this conception as closely as was possible. Simplicity is one of the main characteristics of his poetry.

Among the poets of England, Wordsworth has been rightly called "nature's great interpreter." His admiration for nature was so high, his understanding so deep and sympathetic, that perforce he would describe it truly and accurately. Wordsworth disliked the poetry of Pope because it possessed no traces of emotion and imagination, but it was the poet's artificial description of nature which was particularly disgusting to him. He showed this disapproval when he said, "To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scenes in the "Illiad." A blind man in the habit of attending accurately to description---might easily depict these appearances with more truth."²

A different phase of the romantic movement was presented by the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834.) His was the fanciful, supernatural, imaginative poetry, and his romances were written out of "such stuff as dreams are made of."

1. George, A.J: Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry:Page 8;; Boston:1892.
2. Wordsworth, William: Poetry as a Study.(Moulton, Charles: Library of Literary Criticism. Vol.III:Pg.165: New York,1910.

He disliked the pseudo-classical school. He said, "From the common opinion that the English style attained its greatest perfection in and about Queen Anne's reign, I altogether dissent.¹" Because of this prejudice, Coleridge did not consider himself a competent judge of the Augustan school. "I was not blind to the merits of the school," he said, "yet as from inexperience of the world, and consequent want of sympathy with the general subjects of these poems they gave me little pleasure, I doubtless undervalued the kind, and with the presumption of youth withheld from the masters the legitimate name of poets."²

Hazlitt evidently recognized the critical ability of Coleridge for he said. "Mr. Coleridge---threw a great stone into the standing pool of criticism, which splashed some persons with the mud, but which gave a motion to the service and a reverberation to the neighboring echoes, which has not since subsided."³ Although Coleridge modestly believed himself to be no fair judge of classical poetry, his reputation as a critic of the eighteenth century rates him with Ben Johnson and Dryden--the best critics of the seventeenth century. He was one of the most important romantic critics; and the fact that the poetry of Pope held little pleasure for Coleridge showed a decline in Pope's reputation.

The name of Robert Southey (1774-1843) is usually connected with those of Wordsworth and Coleridge. He is classed in this group because he was closely associated in friendly relations, and was quite as romantic. Saintsbury speaks of him as a

1. Professor Shedd: Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Vol.IV:Pg.341: New York:1868.
2. Coleridge,Samuel: Biographia Literaria: Vol.I.Pg.11: Oxford,1907.
3. Waller and Glover: The Collected Works of William Hazlitt: Vol.IV: Pg.212: New York: 1902.

poet "ranking lower than either Wordsworth or Coleridge, but having done far more to popularise the general theory of romantic poetry than either."¹ Like Wordsworth and Coleridge he rebelled against poetic conventions; he considered the poetry of the classical school no special evidence of genius. "The art of poetry", he said, "or rather the art of versification, which was now the same thing, was made easy to the meanest capacity."²

Southey's chief poems were romantic and adventurous. He experimented in forms of verse, and had a wide range of subjects. His studies in foreign literature added much to the romantic material. This third member of the Lake school was enthusiastic, extreme, revolutionary--a man, "not cast in the mould of other men's opinions, not shaped on any model, and bowing to no authority."³ Southey did not hesitate to attack the works of Pope, and boldly gave his opinion of him. "The age of Pope was the golden age of poets,--but it was the pinchbeck age of poetry. They flourished in the sunshine of public and private patronage; the art meantime was debased, and it continued to be as long as Pope continued lord of ascendant. More injury was not done to the taste of his countrymen by Marino in Italy, nor by Gongor in Spain, than by Pope in England. The mischief was effected not by his satirical and moral pieces, for these entitle him to the highest place among poets of his class; it was by his Homer. There have been other versions as unfaithful; but none were ever so well ex-

1. Saintsbury, George: History of Nineteenth Century Literature; Page 69: New York: 1909.
2. Southey, Robert: Life and Works of William Cowper: Vol.II.Pg.142: London: 1836.
3. Waller and Glover: The Collected Works of William Hazlitt: Vol.IV, Pg.265: New York: 1902.

ecuted in as bad a style; and no other work in the English language so greatly vitiated the diction of English poetry. Common readers (and the majority must always be such) will always be taken by glittering faults, as larks are caught by bits of looking glass, and in this meretricious translation, the passages that were most unlike the original, which were most untrue to nature, and therefore most false in taste, were precisely those which were most applauded, and on which critic after critic dwelt with one cuckoo note of admiration.¹" With a nature so free and unrestrained; a nature that loved freedom and hated conventions, it is only natural that Southey should have a strong dislike for Pope and his imitators.

CONCLUSION.

Alexander Pope reigned supreme in the Augustan age, but in the latter half of the eighteenth century his influence began to wane. This decline in his popularity was evident in the decrease of the editions of his works. Joseph Warton was the first writer to openly criticize him. Ruffhead wrote a "Life of Pope" to dispraise Warton's volumes, and to re-establish the fame of Pope. This book was practically a failure. During the last years of the century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were a few writers who staunchly defended Pope; some followed him in their first years and later deviated from him; others admired him and yet unconsciously followed romantic tendencies;

1. Southey, Robert: Life and Works of William Cowper: Vol.II: Page 141: London, 1836.

while a few outwardly attacked him. On the whole, the defendants of Pope became fewer and fewer, and the established standards of classicism were gradually replaced by the liberties of romanticism.

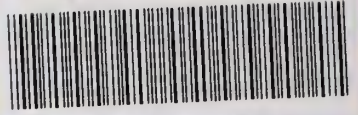
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